

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-6 are currently pending. Claim 1 is an independent claim. Claims 7-11 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-6 are allowed, as recited in page 4 of the Office Action.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 7-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Betker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,909,557). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 10-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Betker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,909,557). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Conclusion

In view of the cancellation of claims 7-11, without prejudice or disclaimer, the 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and 103 rejections should now

be overcome. All claims in the instant application should be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Because the remaining references have been cited merely to show the state of the prior art, no further comments should be necessary.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
Joe McKinney Muncy, #32,334

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

KM/ndb
0941-0312P